



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**FAR AWAY FROM THE REVOLUTION:  
UNDERSTANDING THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY  
ARMED FORCES MISSION CHANGES**

by

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December 2011

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**FAR AWAY FROM THE REVOLUTION: UNDERSTANDING THE CUBAN  
REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES MISSION CHANGES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over five decades have passed since the triumph of Fidel Castro's guerrilla army in the revolution that removed Cuba's dictator Fulgencio Batista. Since then, the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, FAR)—with roots in the revolutionary movement—has redefined its role and missions several times up to the current regime. This thesis explores how the FAR has adapted to mission changes from the end of the revolution to the post-Cold War period (1959–Present) while remaining loyal to the revolution. The FAR's commitment to the state and subordination to political leaders is particularly interesting now with its most recent mission shift into entrepreneurship. This thesis, finally, seeks to analyze the extent of political influence the FAR has exercised and explore potential linkages between shifts in political power and mission change. First, the thesis will chronologically explore the development and progression of the FAR as an institutional actor, paying particular attention to the militarization of the Cuban economy. Second, the implications of all these changes are placed in context by exploring the FAR's power dynamics with other political institutions. Lastly, it will assess the importance of the domestic dimension of the FAR and the contributions to the Cuban economy against the relevance of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC).

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EJT	Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo (Youth Labor Army)
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (Revolutionary Armed Forces)
GAESA	<i>Grupo de Administracion Empresarial S.A.</i> (Enterprise Management Group Inc.)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LCB	Lucha Contra Bandidos
MINFAR	Ministerio de Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces)
MININT	Ministerio del Interior (Ministry of Interior)
MPLA	Movimiento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
MTT	Milicias de Tropas Territoriales (Territorial Troop Militia)
PCC	Partido Comunista de Cuba (Cuban Communist Party)
SPE	Sistema de Perfeccionamiento Empresarial
TRD	<i>Tiendas para la Recaudacion de Divisas</i> (Shops for the Collection of Foreign Currency)
UIM	Unión de la Industria Militar

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Over five decades have passed since the triumph of Fidel Castro's guerrilla army in the revolution that removed Cuba's dictator Fulgencio Batista on December 31, 1958. Since then, the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, FAR)—with roots in the revolutionary movement—has redefined its role and missions several times up to the current regime change that is moving Cuba away from totalitarianism in a “process of post-totalitarianism by decay, societal conquest, and partial reluctant liberalization.”<sup>1</sup> In terms of the FAR's mission changes, from the 1970s to mid 1980s, the FAR shifted from its initial focus of defending the country against possible invasion to a commitment to exporting revolution through international missions. Subsequently, during the late 1980s, the FAR withdrew from its foreign military forays, and, facing budget and personnel cuts, fuel and spare part shortages directly and indirectly caused by the loss of Soviet aid, training and equipment, the FAR's role reverted to national territorial defense; a shift coupled with the creation of the Territorial Troop Militia (MTT) as a way of compensating for the FAR's readiness degradation. This new branch of the FAR consisted of volunteers charged with defending their respective municipalities in case of an external invasion by the United States. The FAR once again shifted its role and missions following the conclusion of the Cold War, when the FAR assumed a critical role in the domestic economy under the Cuban state's *perfeccionamiento empresarial* initiative, an “official policy to guide the full restructuring of the Cuban state economic system.”<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this new program, the FAR was granted control of the sugar and tourism sectors. This thesis explores how the FAR has adapted to mission changes from the end of the revolution to the post-Cold War period (1959–Present) while remaining loyal to the revolution. The FAR's commitment to the state and subordination to political leaders is particularly

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<sup>1</sup> Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Domingo Amuchastegui, “FAR: Mastering Reforms,” *Cuba in Transition: Volume 10*, Papers and Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), Coral Gables, Florida, August 5, 2000, 433.

interesting now with its most recent mission shift into entrepreneurship. The FAR's incursion into the domestic economy is in direct conflict with the legacy of socialist doctrine and has the potential to advance independent capitalist ambitions that may deviate from the regime's domestic and foreign policy direction.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

This thesis seeks to contribute to scholarship and help understanding future political and economic developments in Cuba. In terms of its scholarly value, the thesis attempts to bridge studies covering different stages of the FAR's mission trajectory, research on institutional cohesion, professionalism, and discipline within the FAR, and studies of civilian control of the armed forces.

In terms of its predictive power, the study discusses the expectations about the future role of the FAR in Cuban politics as the country undergoes a regime change. For a regime whose longevity is directly dependent of the armed forces' loyalty to the ruling coalition, it is important to understand how obedience to the revolutionary rule was achieved and sustained. Furthermore, it is also essential to comprehend previous state's rules of accountability for the FAR and the implications of enforcing subordination in terms of the FAR's cohesion and institutional integrity. Of particular concern is whether the FAR's economic interests and political power will slow the transitions to more open political and economic practices on the part of the government.

## **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

This thesis addresses the lack of chronological continuity in literature that explores the development and progression of the FAR as an institutional actor from the revolution until the post-Cold War period in terms of civil-military relations and connections between military missions and civilian control of the FAR. Over the years, the missions of this institution have changed in response to the pressure exerted by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the priorities set by the Castro brothers. Across its many changes in missions, the institution has remained a critical actor in politics. This thesis, finally, seeks to analyze the extent of political influence the FAR has exercised and explore potential linkages between shifts in political power and mission change.

Following the revolution, the FAR evolved and emerged from being a rebel army to a professional military oriented toward the defense of national sovereignty from foreign invasions on Cuban territory. Subsequently, intent on propagating Marxist ideals throughout the region, the FAR undertook a new mission or that of a defender of Marxist-Leninist revolution on the international stage. This shift occurred during the Soviet withdrawal immediately following the Missile Crisis (1962). The FAR turned to sponsoring Cuban-backed rural insurgencies overseas as means to gain allies in the region and beyond. With military victories in Ethiopia (1977–78) and Angola (1975–76, 1987–88), the FAR’s capacity to project power overseas was unique within Latin America. In particular, the FAR’s Angolan campaign to establish the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) as the Angolan government is considered one of its “most significant accomplishments in foreign policy.”<sup>3</sup>

The FAR’s evolution and expansion from a guerrilla force to the national and legitimate armed forces present many exceptional features in civil-military relations. The lack of a political party capable of hegemonic direction at the time the FAR toppled the Batista regime fused the guerrilla elites from the 26th of July Movement into the new de-facto political class and the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) “was created inside the FAR with the political instructions that the military leaders remained the number one source of leadership and authority.”<sup>4</sup> In terms of political control over the military as defined by Samuel Huntington, Cuba’s initial policies cannot be catalogued as either “objective”<sup>5</sup> or “subjective.”<sup>6</sup> While the FAR developed into a highly professional force, it has never been politically neutral. Moreover, diverging from literature that suggests that the relationship between the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) and the FAR ranges from

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<sup>3</sup> “Country Profile: Cuba,” *Library of Congress – Federal Research Division*, September 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Cuba.pdf>, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Domingo Amuchastegui, “Cuba’s Armed Forces: Power and Reforms,” *Cuba in Transition: Volume 9*, Papers and Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), Coral Gables, Florida, August 12–14, 1999, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Professionalizing the military by rendering them politically sterile and neutral while remaining corporately autonomous and responsible for their own expertise. Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (New York: Vintage, 1957), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Granting authority to a government institution, or to a political party, such as the Communist party, over the military.

bureaucratically non-conflictive to mutual consent, subjective control mechanisms were implemented to assert indoctrination, prevent internal cleavages and ensure obedience to the regime by way of political commissars under the Central Political Directorate.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the purge of government officials in 1989 and realignment of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) under the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) increased the FAR's political power by providing it control of coercion hierarchies, communication lines and local officials. The FAR's role in the political arena shares many characteristics of Alfred Stepan's "new professionalism"<sup>8</sup> as far as the scope of actions and skills required but the function of the institution has not been internal. Security and national development was a later occurrence of the post-Cold War reorientation.

In the 1990s, as the Soviet Union collapsed, Cuba was forced to reevaluate its economic model in a period that Fidel Castro referred to as a "special period in time of peace" with the intent of defining the economic "hardship of the system which called for a new initiative to solve the crisis,"<sup>9</sup> caused by the steep drop of imports (particular oil and raw materials) from the Soviet Union coupled with an overall drop of the Cuban GDP. The strategies implemented during the "special period" downgraded the military's operational capacity with budget and personnel cuts. Although by law, the role of the FAR continues to be the protector of the state, the reality is that the FAR's mission has transitioned to involvement in a variety of domestic purposes in response to the domestic economic crisis. Concretely, Cuba's armed forces refocused their mission to assist the government's effort to retard the decline of the centrally controlled economy by assuming control of two of the most important economic sectors: sugar and tourism. During this

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<sup>7</sup> *Handbook on the Cuban Armed Forces* (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, 1979), 1–17, 1–18.

<sup>8</sup> This type of professionalism suggests an interrelationship between military and political spheres, "with the military playing a key role in interpreting and dealing with domestic political problems." Alfred Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in *Authoritarian Brazil*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 47–59.

<sup>9</sup> Armando F. Mastrapa III, "Soldiers and Businessmen: The FAR During the Special Period," *Cuba in Transition: Volume 10*, Miami: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), 2000, 428.

period, the sugar industry resurrected from the “lowest levels of production in well over 50 years”<sup>10</sup> by increasing production by 1.4 metric tons and tourism emerged as “the most lucrative sector of Cuban economy”<sup>11</sup> with over 1 million visitors in 2000.

At the same time, as the FAR has become the “country’s most successful capitalist institution,”<sup>12</sup> it has also maintained important political power (independent of the power it enjoys by running critical industries) through new political roles that include filling important policy-making positions with active duty officers and nominating candidates to the highest levels of state. Even as the restructuring provided means to the FAR officers to protect themselves from the economic crisis by providing privileged access to goods and further opportunities of status mobility, it was not received with universal approval among its ranks. The discontent is evidenced by the defection of two fighter pilots in 1993 and the court martial and execution of Division General Arnaldo Ochoa along with three other officers under charges of corruption. These executions, however, served as an indication that coercion still played a vital role in the containment of dissent from the regime and that military loyalty was not exclusively maintained through mechanisms of reward.

Many scholars, including William Leogrande,<sup>13</sup> Amos Perlmutter,<sup>14</sup> Irving Louis Horowitz,<sup>15</sup> Domingo Amuchastegui<sup>16</sup> and Frank O. Mora,<sup>17</sup> have approached Cuban

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<sup>10</sup> Mastrapa III, “Soldiers and Businessmen: The FAR During the Special Period,” 431.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Miguel A. Centeno, “The Reinvention of Latin American Militaries.” *Americas Quarterly* (2007): 75.

<sup>13</sup> William M. LeoGrande, “A Bureaucratic Approach to Civil- Military Relations in Communist Political Systems: The Case of Cuba,” in *Civil-Military relations in Communist Systems*, ed. Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 201–218.

<sup>14</sup> Amos Perlmutter and William M. Leogrande, “The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems,” *The American Political Science Review* (1982): 778–789.

<sup>15</sup> Irving Louis Horowitz and Jaime Suchlicki, ed., *Cuban Communism: 1959 2003* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Amuchastegui, “FAR: Mastering Reforms,” 433.

<sup>17</sup> Frank O. Mora, “The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier,” *Institute for Cuban & Cuban-American Studies Occasional Papers*, Miami, University of Miami Scholarly Repository, 2004.

civil-military relations through the analysis of the relative power of the PCC over the military. Their Cuban civil-military relations models suggest relationships ranging from neutrality, which is symbiotic to the suggestion of FAR's dominance models over the PCC. This thesis differs by utilizing the pattern of civil-military relations suggested by J. Samuel Fitch; hence, analysis is not limited to the PCC's policy control over the military. It also analyzes the influence of the military over the PCC while tentatively subscribing to the description of "conditional military subordination" in which the FAR could be catalogued as "armed forces that abstain from overt intervention in political questions...while it reserves its right to protect national interest and guarantee national security in times of crisis."<sup>18</sup> To analyze further the FAR's influence over policy, the framework by Harold Trinkunas is utilized to assess "the boundaries between military and civilian jurisdictions."<sup>19</sup> The areas used in this framework are characterized "by their functional distance from the military's war-fighting mission and by the degree of threat to civilian control posed by military involvement."<sup>20</sup> The post-Cold War period will be analyzed by using Kristina Mani's analysis of how military entrepreneurship functions consider "the level of state capacity and the nature of military organization."<sup>21</sup> Determining who (regime or the military) takes the initiative in the creation of military enterprises determines who will maintain control over the development of such enterprises, but more importantly, the level professionalism of the military serves as a potential indicator of how those economic gains will be destined to be institutional or personal.

#### **D. METHODS AND SOURCES**

The objective of this analysis is to assess the relations between the FAR's missions—focusing in particular on its post-Cold War entrepreneurial role—and its

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<sup>18</sup> J. Samuel Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 40.

<sup>19</sup> Harold A. Trinkunas, "Crafting Civilian Control in Emerging Democracies: Argentina and Venezuela," *Latin American Politics and Society* (2000): 80.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>21</sup> Kristina Mani, "Military in Business: State Making and Entrepreneurship in the Developing World," *Armed Forces & Society* (2007): 593.



political roles across time. The study involves research using secondary sources on the FAR's military missions across time with particular attention paid to the causal mechanisms of change be they domestic in nature or from foreign pressure and the implications of these changes on military political power vis-à-vis civilians in the government. The factors to be addressed include civil military-relations theory, the FAR's chronological transitions across different missions, institutional cohesion, professionalism and discipline within the FAR. To determine how the FAR adapted to mission changes, the progression and extent of the country's reforms are explored from the emergence of legitimate armed forces out of a guerrilla group to the post-Soviet period.

FAR's path to institutional dominance in terms of operational autonomy and its record of accomplishment of achieving policy objectives is explored by a chronological analysis of its foundation political prerogatives as a source of political leadership and current sources of economic clout. This latter theme is illustrated with the analysis of the effects of the FAR's alternative functions caused by the collapse of the party state socialism in Easter Europe. The economic restructuring of the financial and managerial foundation of major industries in Cuba known as *Sistema de Perfeccionamiento Empresarial* - SPE (official policy to guide the full restructuring of the Cuban state economic system<sup>22</sup>) is examined with particular attention paid to the sugar and tourism industries.

## **E. THESIS OVERVIEW**

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter II explores the development and progression of the FAR as an institutional actor and traces the FAR's beginning from a guerrilla force to its post-revolutionary expansion and legitimization. Chapter III chronologically evaluates the political and economic effects of the collapse of the party-state socialism in Eastern Europe (*Special Period*). Chapter IV covers the militarization of the Cuban economy and explores strategies addressing the "special period" as they have shifted the FAR's role to a central position within the domestic economy. This

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<sup>22</sup> Amuchastegui, "FAR: Mastering Reforms," 433.

chapter also examines two important economy sectors, sugar and tourism, and the project used towards their economic liberalization (*perfeccionamiento empresarial*). Finally, the implications of all these changes are placed in context by exploring the FAR's power dynamics with other political institutions. Chapter V assesses the importance of the domestic dimension of the FAR and the contributions to the Cuban economy against the relevance of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) in this post-totalitarian phase of the regime.

## **II. DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION OF THE FAR AS AN INSTITUTIONAL ACTOR**

### **A. POST-REVOLUTION: FROM REBEL ARMY TO THE FIRST INCURSION INTO SOCIO-ECONOMIC MISSIONS**

As Fidel Castro consolidated his government, assumed power, and eradicated Batista's establishment by transferring the duties and summary executions of as many as "600"<sup>23</sup> former regime loyalists, the Rebel Army assumed its first mission of providing territorial defense and maintaining internal security that led to the creation of what is now known as the FAR. This initial mission responded to counterrevolutionary forces that rose against Castro's government from 1960–1965.

Initially, the missions to suppress internal challenges responded to domestic insurgents who established themselves in the "Escambray Mountains of Las Villas province in central Cuba."<sup>24</sup> Later, the mission against the internal resistance countered covert attacks of the United States in Cuba, which was the case of the Bay of Pigs, "in which some 1,300 CIA-trained Cuban exiles stormed a Cuban beach in April 1961, only to surrender three days later."<sup>25</sup>

Externally, the combination of the Monroe Doctrine principle of Latin America as an exclusive area of U.S. influence to stop the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere catalyzed the perfect adversarial conditions in Cuba just as Castro declared it a "Marxist-Leninist" state."<sup>26</sup> The expropriation of U.S. properties and investments on "April 16, 1961,"<sup>27</sup> along with the movement of that country toward close relations with

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<sup>23</sup> Pascal Fontaine, "Communism in Latin America." in *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, ed. Stephane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean- Louis Panne, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosec and Jean-Louis Margolin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 648.

<sup>24</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1978), 345.

<sup>25</sup> Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), Kindle edition, 8.

<sup>26</sup> James M. McCormick, *American Foreign Policy & Process*, 5th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 87.

<sup>27</sup> "Country Profile: Cuba," *Library of Congress—Federal Research Division*, September 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Cuba.pdf>, 3.

the Soviet Union, worsened U.S.-Cuban relations that resulted in a U.S. strategy to address the Cuban revolution that ranged from “pressuring Castro toward moderation—a difficult challenge—to attempting to eliminate him through military intervention, insurrection, and assassination.”<sup>28</sup>

Domestically, the regime faced a dramatic increase of insurrection following the Bay of Pigs invasion. From March to September 1962, the insurgency bands in Escambray nearly doubled in strength ranging from “forty two to seventy nine”<sup>29</sup> bands during that period. In response to this threat, by July 1962, the FAR had organized the first special corps with the mission of fighting the insurgency named “Lucha Contra Bandidos, or LCB.”<sup>30</sup> The counterrevolutionary forces continued to expand to all six provinces and in strength up to “179 insurrectionary bands”<sup>31</sup> during the first five years of the FAR’s existence. The difference in response against insurrection from Batista to Castro was the magnitude of the forces committed. The initial survival of the regime can be attributed to a deployment of forces “ten times greater”<sup>32</sup> than what Batista utilized for similar intensity and amount of fighting.

Concurrently, during the initial 3-year period (1959–1961), FAR officers occupied commanding positions in education, land reform, judicial system and the police. As stated in the book from Damian J. Fernandez, “these years marked the entrance of the Rebel Army into national life not only as a defense institution but also as an administrative arm of the state in spheres such as education, land reform, justice (*tribunals militares*), police functions, and other socio-economic works.”<sup>33</sup> This fusion of civilian and military functions produced what Jorge Dominguez describes as the “civic soldier...men who govern large segments of both military and civilian life...bearers of

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<sup>28</sup> “Country Profile: Cuba,” *Library of Congress—Federal Research Division*, 840; Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 2000), Kindle edition.

<sup>29</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 345.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Damian J. Fernandez, “Historical Background: Achievement, Failures and Prospects,” in *The Cuban Military Under Castro*, ed. Jaime Suchlicki (Miami: University of Miami, 1989), 5.

the revolutionary tradition and ideology...who have dedicated themselves to become professional in political economic, managerial, engineering and educational as well as military affairs.”<sup>34</sup>

### **1. Preconditions for Internal Cohesion**

The ability of the revolutionary regime to persevere in spite of internal and external challenges during the first five years (1959–1963) was due to the FAR’s resilience as an institution, administrative capacity, and its loyalty to Castro’s direction. The subordination of the FAR to *Fidelista* control while preserving institutional cohesion was achieved through cycles of rewarding loyalty and coercing potential internal challenges into submission.

The foundation of FAR discipline traced back to the insurrection against Batista were “minor infractions were dealt harshly,” with punishment that could lead “up to and including execution.”<sup>35</sup> This foundation of discipline was reinforced with rewards for loyalty to Fidel Castro as the commander in chief, and hence, enhanced his control over the military. Loyalty was rewarded through appointments to command provinces, key installations or government programs and by allowing access to the leaders of the revolution, the Castro brothers (Raul and Fidel) and Ernesto “Che” Guevara.

The opposite side of the control spectrum encompasses the coercion tactics or penalties for disloyalty. This process began with the trials of former Batista military officials, and as the communist ties to the regime became more apparent, it formalized with the trial of Major Huber Matos.

Huber Matos, a popular Sierra *comandante* and Army Chief of Camaguey Province, was arrested and imprisoned in 1959 on charges of conspiracy against the Revolution. He, along with the other officers who defected symbolized the antagonism within the army toward the participation of communist sympathizers in the military especially in political education posts.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 342.

<sup>35</sup> Walker, “Political-Military Relations from 1959 to the Present,” 442.

<sup>36</sup> Fernandez, “Historical Background: Achievement, Failures and Prospects,” 6.

By 1961, with the introduction of political indoctrination by way of the first cadre of 750 graduates of the “Osvaldo Sanchez Cabrera School for Revolutionary Instructors,”<sup>37</sup> the FAR had developed the preconditions for its internal cohesion. The definition of the revolution’s ideology within the FAR narrowed down the political space for dissent, which culminated in the conflict developed between political instructors and commanders over the guidance along the “correct revolutionary path.”<sup>38</sup> As a solution to this conflict in 1963, the FAR won the exclusivity of political instruction granted only to military personnel, and hence, a political apparatus within the FAR was created.

The mission of the party in the FAR was to support the institution in the execution of its professional responsibilities. As described by Comandante Jose N. Causse Perez, then the chief of the FAR’s Political Directorate, the party might lead the FAR at the national level, but at the operational level its “fundamental mission [was] to aid the chief and the political instructor to better carry out the orders, missions and tasks of the unit.”<sup>39</sup>

Since party membership became a prerequisite for career advancement in the FAR, the FAR representation in the party grew. By 1996, “as many as 90 percent of the senior military officers had joined the party and two thirds of the one hundred member Central Committee were men who held military rank.”<sup>40</sup>

The homogenization of the revolution’s ideology and the prominence of the FAR’s officer corps in the party apparatus set the conditions by earning Castro’s confidence for a professionalization phase that therefore served as a foothold to the FAR’s next mission transition.

## **B. PROFESSIONALIZATION AND EXPANSION INTO INTERNATIONALISM**

The failure in achieving 10 million tons of sugar production in 1970 served as a catalyst for the separation and distinction of roles between the military and the party along with Castro’s strategic ambitions. The reduction of the military personnel load on

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<sup>37</sup> Walker, “Political-Military Relations from 1959 to the Present,” 446.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 447.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 448.

the Cuban economy resulted in a “modern professional small standing force combined with an easily mobilized reserve.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, as other civilian institutions (to include the PCC) increased their capability, the FAR role was initially bound to national defense. The FAR’s relief from economic production activities was facilitated with the creation of the Youth Labor Army (*Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo—EJT*) as the latter was charged with the missions of a socio-economic development nature.

During the initial phase of this professionalization period, the military education system was improved with the addition of specialized schools, such as the “technological institute for military technicians and engineers...the school for administrators of military-equipment maintenance,”<sup>42</sup> among others. However, the most important feature was that lower schools fed to higher schools; for example, a great percentage of the graduates of the military high school (Camilo Cienfuegos) was admitted to the military technological institute. This military school system, in turn, contributed to the ideological hegemony of the armed forces. It is also important to mention that the FAR’s rank structure was also reorganized during this period to resemble other armed forces around the world.

Although the professionalization period reduced the armed forces in strength from “200,000 personnel... only in four years later the FAR had been cut in half,”<sup>43</sup> the support (equipment and training) obtained by Raul Castro from the Soviet Union may have given Fidel the confidence to change the FAR’s mission from national defense to an offensive internationalist role.

The exogenous pressure sponsoring this mission change can also be interpreted as a response to the Bay of Pigs invasion as stated by Gleijeses:

U.S. hostility spurred Castro to expand his vistas beyond the Western Hemisphere: it would have been suicidal to respond directly to the American assault-by attacking the U.S. base at Guantanamo, striking the U-2s that flew over the island, or providing material assistance to radical

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<sup>41</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 349–350.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>43</sup> Walker, “Political-Military Relations from 1959 to the Present,” 450.

groups in the United States. Cuba could strike only in the periphery-in Latin America, in Africa, even in Asia. (It offered to send volunteers to fight in Vietnam).<sup>44</sup>

Thus far, only Fidel or Raul Castro, and until 1965, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, were involved in the overall direction of defense policy. Another interpretation argues that guided by the post “missile crisis” perception of Soviet Union abandonment, Castro resorted to exporting revolution as a means to gain allies in the region and beyond. Perhaps better articulated in the CIA’s country study, “If Cuba could no longer count on the Soviet Union for its defence, and it still feared a hostile United States, then the development of an allied bloc of third world countries, especially in Latin America, might have been one way to provide for its defence.”<sup>45</sup> Gleijeses’ book, however, describes the mission shift from an exclusive agency perspective:

According to U.S. officials, this “messianic compulsion to lead ‘revolution’” was one of Castro’s “two basic goals or drives.” The other was “the survival of the [Cuban] Revolution”: he was “intent upon making it economically viable” and he was “determined to win prestige and preserve for Cuba what he conceives of as an independent status.” Quoting Castro himself, U.S. analysts noted that he saw Cuba as “a small country, attacked, blockaded, against which a policy of undeclared war is being followed,” and that he believed that the survival of the revolution depended on “‘other Cubas’ succeeding on the continent.... [Castro thought] that the U.S. would ultimately be forced to come to terms with Cuba when it has to deal simultaneously with ‘several’ other revolutionary regimes.”<sup>46</sup>

The initial efforts to export revolution forces were countered by the U.S.’ increase in counter subversion methods employed in Latin America, as the Cubans proved to be more willing to take further risks in overt interventions than the Soviets. By 1970, the first wave of Cuban-backed rural insurgencies in South America was eliminated.

Until the defeat in South America, the internationalist mission was covert and decided by Castro in an ad-hoc fashion. The introduction of Cuban troops into Angola marked the first step of the regime pursuing overtly Cuba interests and those of the Soviet

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<sup>44</sup> Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959–1976*, 75.

<sup>45</sup> Philip Brenner, “Cuba and the Missile Crisis,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* (1990): 141.

<sup>46</sup> Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959–1976*, 75.



Union by using the FAR as a policy instrument. Externally, this mission was made possible by the political and economic rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Cuba. Internally, it provided the FAR a test bed for its operational capabilities.

In 1975, the introduction of Cuban troops in Angola as part of Operation Carlota facilitated the uprising of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). By 1976, 36,000 Cuban troops participated in the fighting that led to the installation of the MPLA as the government of the newly independent nation. The Soviet Union assisted in transporting Cuban troops, and provided supplies and equipment to include “MiG-23 jet fighters and T-62 main battle tanks.”<sup>47</sup>

After Angola, Cuba’s largest military intervention was in Ethiopia, where in 1978 16,000 Cuban troops helped repulse the invading Somali army. The operation was strictly coordinated with and supported by the Soviet Union. Tens of thousands of Cubans armed with Soviet weapons remained in Angola through the 1980s. Smaller military missions were active in the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Benin. Cuban military instructors trained Namibian, Rhodesian, and South African guerrillas.<sup>48</sup>

The incursion into “proletarian internationalism” came at an opportune time when the FAR was facing the possibility of being sidelined with obsolete missions because the organized opposition to the regime had vanished and external threats were unlikely. “The military budget frozen at 5% (of the country’s GDP) since the 1960s, experienced an upswing, reaching 13% in 1985.”<sup>49</sup> Soviet supplied equipment not only modernized the force, but also transformed it from a defense-oriented organization into an offensive force. The dual command structure (domestic and international) provided opportunities for the promotion of military personnel to middle and top-level officers. However, most importantly at a global stage, the Angolan experience granted the FAR prestige by being a small state Army capable of projecting troops overseas and winning wars.

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<sup>47</sup> Walker, “Political-Military Relations from 1959 to the Present,” 451.

<sup>48</sup> Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959–1976*, 78.

<sup>49</sup> Fernandez, “Historical Background: Achievement, Failures and Prospects,” 15.

### C. POPULAR MILITARIZATION

The year 1980 marked yet another change in Cuban military missions in contrast to the previous decade. This period was characterized by the resurgence of popular militarization, which was embodied with the creation of the Territorial Troop Militia (MTT) and the adoption of the doctrine “War of All the People.”

As defined by Castro, the MTT was “one more force, formed voluntarily, integrated by men and women, laborers, farmers, students, who were willing to fight and have not already been inducted into the reserve of the regular troops or into the Civil Defense”<sup>50</sup> In just two years, the MTT strength amassed “30,000 officers and 500,000 militia.”<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, in an attempt to deconflict institutional disputes, the FAR was initially assigned shared responsibilities, but following its defeat in Grenada, the Ministry of Interior (MININT) assumed the responsibility of running the MTT, and the party was also given responsibilities in this area at the local levels.

At a national level, “the Castro brothers, Juan Almeida, Osmany Cienfuegos, and Pedro Miret” shared the MTT leadership.<sup>52</sup> At a local level, local and regional party organizations coordinated the efforts. Raul Castro frequently attributed this particular leadership arrangement to the PCC. He declared, “the party is the true architect of that decisive step toward fighting the war of the entire people as represented by the defense zones.”<sup>53</sup>

From an external aspect, poor performance during the U.S. invasion of Grenada, decreasing Soviet military assistance, coupled with the unpopularity of the Angolan campaign among the anti-internationalists’ faction of the FAR, once again highlighted the regime’s coercion mechanism of control. The first instance was through the demotion of the chief of Cuban forces in Granada, Colonel Torotolo. Interestingly enough, his return

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<sup>50</sup> Andres Suarez, “Civil Military Relations in Cuba,” in *The Cuban Military Under Castro*, ed. Jaime Suchlicki, Miami: University of Miami, 1989), 142.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Juan del Aguila, “The Changing Character of Cuba’s Armed Forces,” in *The Cuban Military Under Castro*, ed. Jaime Suchlicki, Miami: University of Miami, 1989), 54.

<sup>53</sup> Fernandez, “Historical Background: Achievement, Failures and Prospects,” 19.

was celebrated with a hero's welcome, only to be publicly demoted two months later by Raul Castro and sent to serve in Angola for ignoring his orders to "die fighting, regardless of the difficulty and the disadvantage of the circumstances."<sup>54</sup>

Although disaffection among the ranks is hard to judge due to the closed nature of the Cuban military, the defections of "Lt Col Muorino in 1984 and Brigadier General del Pino in 1987,"<sup>55</sup> could be interpreted as indicators of a period of institutional discontent in the FAR. This period of trial culminated with the court martial and execution of "Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa and three fellow officers"<sup>56</sup> on charges of corruption to make perfectly clear that dissent would be quickly retaliated against harshly by coercion and the elimination of any possible challenges from within.

In terms of civil-military relations, the most significant event in terms of military political clout during this time period was also a byproduct of the Ochoa trial. As depicted by Armando F. Mastrapa III in his article, "Evolution, Transition and The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces," he argues that the Ochoa trial resulted from the Ministry of the Interior's (Ministerio del Interior—MININT) independence and Castro's perception as a threat to his power. Thus, the FAR's clout peaked with the resulting purge of disloyal officers and the exclusive consolidation of coercive power in 1989, "when the police, intelligence, and security services of the Ministry of Interior came under their control."<sup>57</sup>

The 1980s culminated with the U.S.-brokered return of Cuban troops from Angola, the incorporation of western business practices into military industries, which was a by-product of Cuba's inability to secure foreign loans, and yet, another shift of the military's mission into a domestic role. This shift began in 1987 with "*Plan Turquino*,"<sup>58</sup> as it was designed to improve living conditions and economics prospects in the rural

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<sup>54</sup> Fernandez, "Historical Background: Achievement, Failures and Prospects," 20.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>56</sup> Walker, "Political-Military Relations from 1959 to the Present," 455.

<sup>57</sup> Brian Latell, "The Cuban Military and Transition Dynamics," *Cuban Transition Project, Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami*. 2003, [http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu/Research\\_Studies/BLatell.pdf](http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu/Research_Studies/BLatell.pdf), 2.

<sup>58</sup> *EcuRed*. September 18, 2011, [http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Plan\\_Turquino](http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Plan_Turquino).

mountainside that comprise “*Guaniguanico, Escambray, Sierra Maestra and Macizo Nipe-Sagua-Baracoa*”<sup>59</sup> while it also continued with the militarization of domestic economy industries (tourism included) to raise revenue for the state. “Civilian and military elites and functional specialization was, once again, blurred because of the armed forces enhanced role in the economy, party, bureaucracy, and state augmented by the leadership’s reorganization and reassertion of control of the military.”<sup>60</sup>

#### **D. PATTERNS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

Since Cuba’s military and political development differs from all communist systems in which a political hegemony existed prior to the expansion of a military force, this thesis aims to explain the power dynamics using different explanatory models. As opposed to other civil-military scholars who have written about the FAR, this thesis analyzes both the power of the political class over the military, as well as military influence over the PCC.

To examine the FAR’s influence over policy further, the framework by Dr. Harold A. Trinkunas is utilized to assess “the boundaries between military and civilian jurisdictions.”<sup>61</sup> The areas used in this framework are characterized “by their functional distance from the military’s war-fighting mission and by the degree of threat to civilian control posed by military involvement.”<sup>62</sup> Given that Cuba is a communist system in which the lines between the state, armed forces and civilians are blurred, this analysis is reinforced with J. Samuel Fitch’s framework to categorize patterns of civil-military relations from his book, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*. His framework measures the influence of the military over the PCC and not just the opposite. His approach recognizes the importance of institutional, political and international contexts that shape military behavior.

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<sup>59</sup> *EcuRed*. September 18, 2011, [http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Plan\\_Turquino](http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Plan_Turquino).

<sup>60</sup> Mora, “The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier,” 4.

<sup>61</sup> Harold A. Trinkunas, “Crafting Civilian Control in Emerging Democracies: Argentina and Venezuela,” *Latin American Politics and Society* (2000): 80.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*.

Figure 1 is utilized as the base model to illustrate the jurisdictional boundaries between the military and state jurisdictions represented as role areas within four concentric rings.

External defense tasks involve preparing for and conducting war and related military missions, managing the military bureaucracy, training, and strategic planning. Internal security includes the maintenance of public order in emergency situations, preparation for counterinsurgency warfare, the gathering of domestic intelligence and policing. Public policy covers the state budgets, the functioning of government agencies and the crafting of public policy to achieve social welfare, development and political objectives. State Leadership selection involves decisions concerning the criteria and process by which government officials are recruited, legitimated, and empowered.<sup>63</sup>

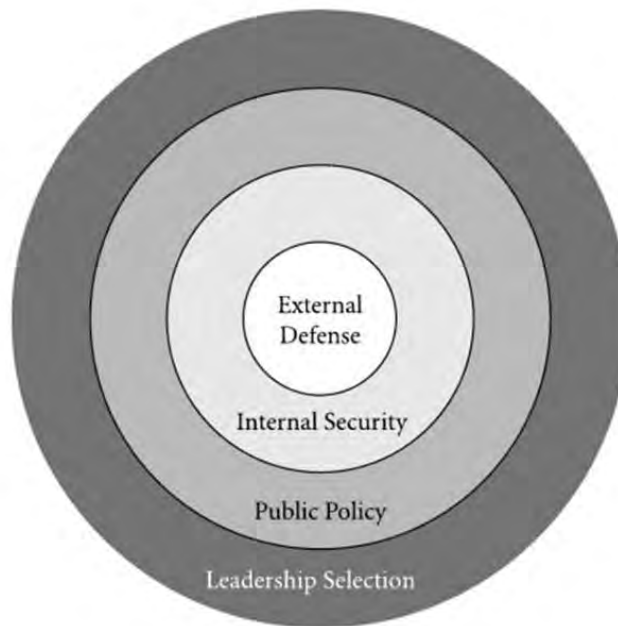


Figure 1. Jurisdictional Boundaries

As described earlier in this chapter, the post-revolutionary structural foundation of the FAR set the conditions for its exceptional political power dynamics. The absence of a party dominant structure led to the fusion of the guerilla elites into the de-facto political class in what could be defined using Juan J. Linz's typology from the book, *Totalitarian*

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<sup>63</sup> Harold A. Trinkunas, *Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela: A Comparative Perspective* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7.

*and Authoritarian Regimes*, initially as an “interim crisis government”<sup>64</sup> that imposed its rulership based on “a mixture of fear and rewards to its collaborators”<sup>65</sup> resembling a “sultanistic dictatorship.” This transitional period resulted in the consolidation of a “political system resulting from the importance of ideology, the tendency toward a monistic center of power and the emphasis on mass participation and mobilization,”<sup>66</sup> much like a “totalitarian party.”

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics during the post-revolutionary period. During this time, the FAR was directly involved in external defense during the Bay of Pigs invasion, internal defense in its mission against insurrectionary bands in the Escambray Mountains, and assumed socio-economic missions that granted a shared jurisdiction over policy, such as the sugar industry. Since both Castro brothers wore uniforms and fulfilled commanding capacities over the military at the time, and the PCC had yet to consolidate, this period could be categorized as militarily controlled—defined by the “de-facto political subordination of nominally civilian governments to effective military control.”<sup>67</sup> It is also important to mention that during this period, the foundation of the FAR institutional cohesion was developed by formalizing indoctrination, defining the Cuban communist ideology, overlapping responsibilities between the state and the military, and most importantly, through cycles of rewards for loyalty and severe punishment for dissent.

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<sup>64</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 63.

<sup>65</sup> Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), 151.

<sup>66</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 78.

<sup>67</sup> Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*, 38.

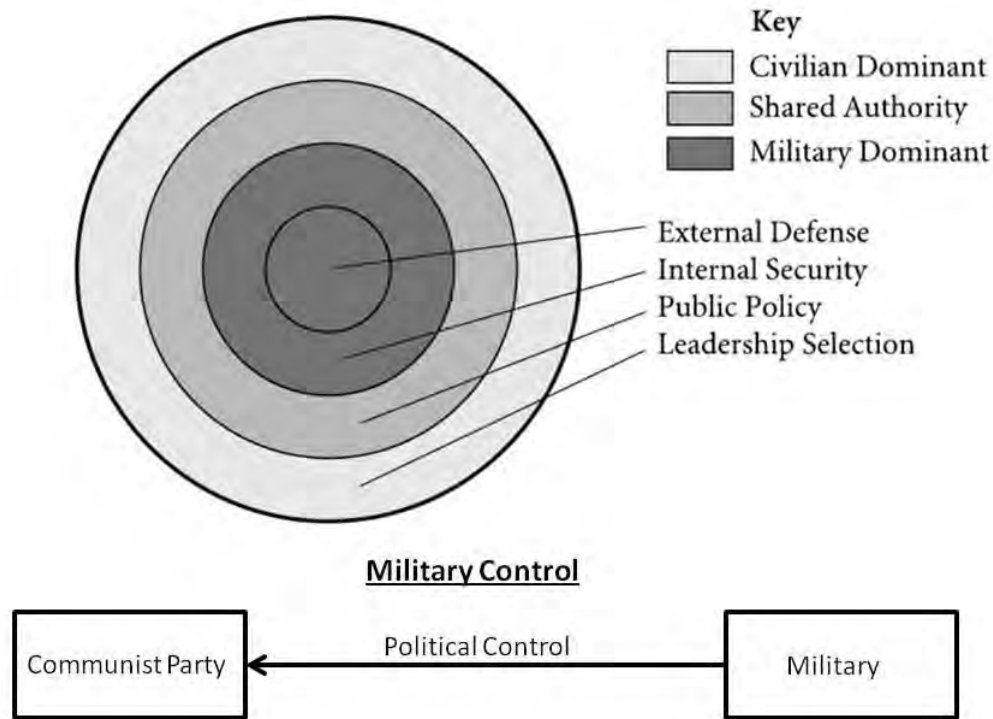


Figure 2. Post-Revolutionary Period

Figure 3 illustrates the jurisdictional withdrawal that occurred during the professionalization period. The specialization, training and equipment transformation of the FAR that led to the internationalist incursions in Africa could be categorized as “conditional military subordination” in which “under normal circumstances the armed forces abstain from overt intervention in political questions. Notwithstanding, the military reserves its “right” to intervene to protect national interests and guarantee national security in times of crisis.”<sup>68</sup> The decisions made by the top three (Fidel, Raul and Che) with respect to the internationalist commitment could be interpreted as state policy while the operational decisions over the employment of such forces by the FAR leadership corresponded to its limited influence.

<sup>68</sup> Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*, 40.

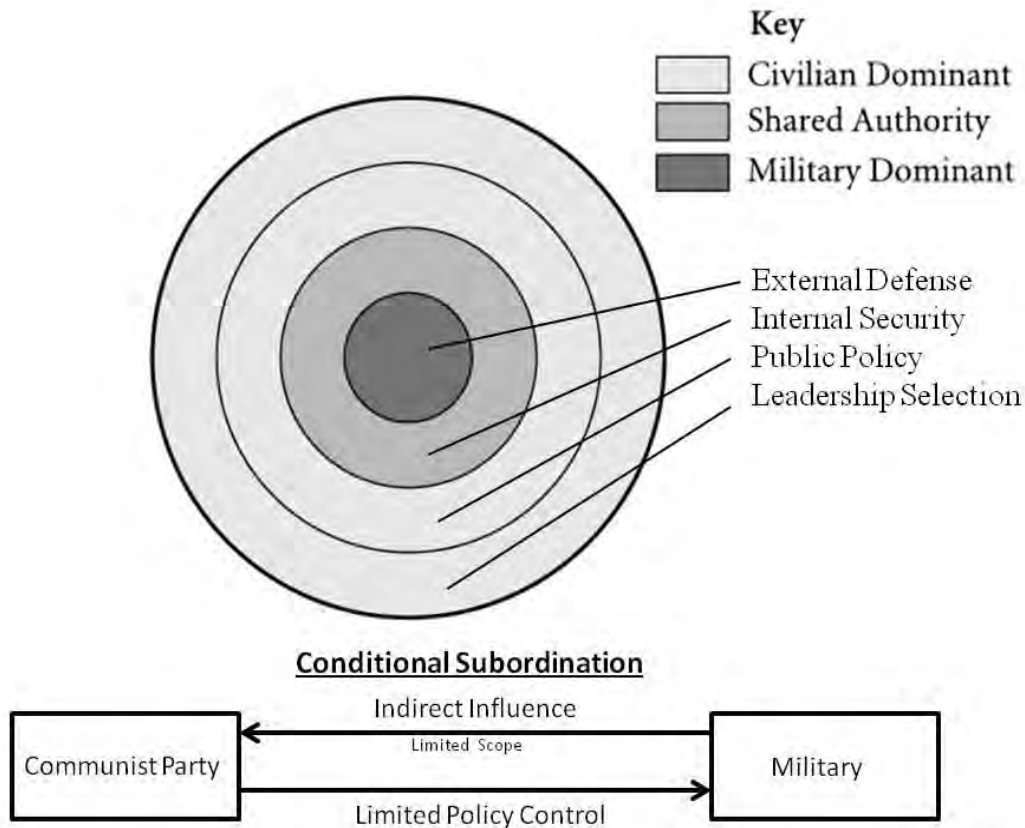


Figure 3. Profesionalization Period

The popular militarization period representation was deliberately omitted, as it was a transitional period of jurisdictional expansion. The peak of the FAR as a professional force gave way to a steep decline in military capacity but resurgence of economic and political responsibilities propelled by a failing economy, curtailment of Soviet support and the regime's survival efforts. The civil-military relations in play during the FAR expansion into the economy are covered in the next chapter as it addresses the strategies used to compensate for the collapse of the Soviet Union.



### III. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE PARTY-STATE SOCIALISM IN EASTERN EUROPE (SPECIAL PERIOD)

In the 1990s, as the Soviet Union collapsed, Cuba was forced to re-evaluate its economic model in a period that Fidel Castro called a “special period in time of peace.”<sup>69</sup> During this period, the country’s main supporter (the Soviet Union) cut off external aid and the inefficiencies of the centrally planned economy gave way to the FAR’s employment of Western-styled business improvement models to tackle the crisis. The macro-economic pressure along with the strategic formulation of the regime’s leadership transformed the FAR from competent combat force to something more in line with an entrepreneurial megacorporation. Although by law, the mission<sup>70</sup> of the FAR continued to be the protector of the state,<sup>71</sup> the reality is that the FAR’s mission transitioned to employment in a variety of domestic purposes in response to the domestic economic crisis. No longer a warfighter,<sup>72</sup> or arguably a defender<sup>73</sup> by capacity, the FAR has changed their mission to assist in the regime’s survival through re-insertion into the domestic economy that included involvement in the agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors.

By 1992, as Cuba faced a “suspensions of oil deliveries, the collapse of trade,...and a 40–45% decline in GDP,”<sup>74</sup> the FAR also endured significant changes that

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<sup>69</sup> Mastrapa III, “Soldiers and Businessmen: The FAR During the Special Period,” 428.

<sup>70</sup> Broad and enduring purpose. Paul Schemella, “The Spectrum of Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces,” in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Tollefson D. Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

<sup>71</sup> “Combat the aggressor from the very first moment and then, with the entire people, conduct the war during the time necessary, under any circumstance, until the victory is attained (Ley de Defensa Nacional, N° 75 – 1994/12/21, Sec. 34)””; Rafael Hernandez, “The Armed Forces in the Cuban Transition,” in *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and Caribbean*, ed. Marcela Donadio and Maria de la Paz Tibletti (Buenos Aires: RESDAL, 2010), 187.

<sup>72</sup> Capable of waging offensive war. Schemella, “The Spectrum of Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces.”

<sup>73</sup> Respond to armed attack within the region. Schemella, “The Spectrum of Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces.”

<sup>74</sup> Eusibeo Mugal-León, “Can Cuba Change?: Tensions in the Regime,” *Journal of Democracy* (2009): 57.

included budget cuts, personnel cutbacks, curtailed equipment and training. The Soviet economic collapse directly affected the FAR by eliminating “\$16–19 billion in military assistance.”<sup>75</sup> Cuban fiduciary budget cuts reduced the FAR’s budget from \$2.2 billion in 1988 to \$1.35 billion three years later. As a whole, the FAR’s expenditures declined from “13 percent of the national budget in the mid 1980s...to less than 1.6 percent in 1995.”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the armed forces also lost half of its forces through cutbacks, retirements and reduced conscription terms during this period; troop strength was reduced from “108,500 in 1990 to...55,000 in 2000.”<sup>77</sup>

The FAR’s strategy in response to reductions was implementing an “intensive conservation effort undertaken for a wholly autarkic existence...conserving existing material and equipment, which along with self sufficiency and defense readiness is one of the FAR’s three main goals.”<sup>78</sup> This so-called “zero option” was enabled by the management initiatives implemented by Raul Castro in the mid-1980s. FAR officers were sent to Europe to study western business methods, techniques of economic management and production. The *sistema de perfeccionamiento empresarial* (SPE) was tested at the “*Empresa Militar Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara*,”<sup>79</sup> later expanded to “more than 200 factories of the *Unión de la Industria Militar (UIM)*”<sup>80</sup> and by 1998, under Fidel’s direction, 3,000 state non-military enterprises applied the model.

When analyzing the FAR’s combat readiness during the special period, it is important to notice the significant degradation in the curtailment of aviation, armor, artillery and mechanized training. The lack of fuel and spare parts increased downtime, while it fostered cannibalization and mothballing of equipment. This lack of resources was not mitigated through cost-cutting adjustments; hence, resulting in degradation of training and preparedness limited to rudimentary infantry skills.

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<sup>75</sup> Mora, *The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier*, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Mujal-León, “Can Cuba Change?: Tensions in the Regime,” 51.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 65.

The downgrade in warfighting capacity during the special period raises the following question: What were the effects of the FAR's alternative functions during the "special period" on its political power? To address this issue, it is necessary to consider the strategies implemented and their effects. "Among these were the "dollarization" of the economy, the search for foreign capital and the creation of numerous joint venture companies (many of them run by officers of the FAR)."<sup>81</sup> The joint ventures formed niches of sheltered capitalism that along with the dependence on remittances from overseas Cubans magnified social cleavages based on access to dollars and resources. These measures helped the regime survive and reinforced loyalty to the ruling coalition. Therefore, even as the military operational capacity of the FAR degenerated over the years, its cohesion as an institution and to the regime was co-opted by access to resources. However, this will be articulated in the next chapter as it explains in depth the militarization of the Cuban economy.

#### **A. EFFECTS OF "DOWNSIZING"**

Facing the challenge of readiness degradation and end strength reduction, the FAR focused on becoming self-sufficient while maintaining a defensive capacity. The challenge was effectively mitigated through the implementation of SPE management procedures and the state's delegation on the FAR to establish joint venture companies with foreign investors. "Since the collapse of Soviet subsidies in the early 1990s, business managed by the Cuban armed forces has grown to account for over three quarters of export earnings."<sup>82</sup> By 2001:

Over 300 enterprises associated with the FAR...account for nearly 90 percent of Cuban exports, nearly 60 percent of tourism earnings, and employed 20 percent of state workers. The most important of the FAR enterprises was the holding company GAESA whose subsidiaries (among them Gaviota and Agrotex), operate hotels and hard currency shops (the

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<sup>81</sup> Mujal-León, "Can Cuba Change?: Tensions in the Regime,"21.

<sup>82</sup> Centeno, "The Reinvention of Latin American Militaries," 75.

nearly 400 *tiendas de recaudacion de divisas* catering to foreigners or Cubans with dollars or euros), and are involved in aviation, mining and the citrus industry.<sup>83</sup>

The FAR's current domestic mission expansion is reflected in the portfolio of state institutions it effectively controls: the Ministry of Sugar Industry, National State Reserve Institute, Ministry of Fisheries and Merchant Marine, Ministry of Transport and Ports, Cuban Civil Aviation Corporation Inc., National Institute of State Reserves, Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, Grupo Electrónica de Cuba, which includes COPEXTEL telecoms, Cuban Civil Aviation Corporation, Habanos, S.A. (tobacco products), Gaviota Inc. (tourist enterprise), Metropolitan Bank, GeoCuba Entrepreneurial Group (land concessions and leases), TECNOTEC (high-tech importer/exporter), Industrial Military Union (12 major industries, 16 factories, 230 facilities), Plan-Turquino-Manati (a funded developmental plan covering 20 municipalities), Plan for Entrepreneurial Redesign, CIMEX (import/export, free-trade zones, tourism, transportation, digital communications equipment, car rentals and audiovisual publicity), CUBANA-CAN (similar to CIMEX), Citrus (agricultural and industrial processing), State Commission for Entrepreneurial Perfection, and Ideological Department of the Central Committee.<sup>84</sup>

Ironically, the FAR has become a vanguard institution of economic liberalization measures, especially in the area of foreign investment driven business management. The sheer proportionality of institutions led by the FAR is indicative of the centrality of its role and follows the trend proposed by Victoria M. Murillo in "Political Bias in Policy Convergence: Privatization Choices in Latin America." The paper argues that economic nationalism<sup>85</sup> and political bias<sup>86</sup> influence the selection of regulations at the time of privatization. Since Cuba is a country that fosters high economic nationalism,

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<sup>83</sup> Mujal-León, "Can Cuba Change?: Tensions in the Regime," 65.

<sup>84</sup> Amuchastegui, "Cuba's Armed Forces: Power and Reforms," 110; Geoff Demarest, "Cuba's Transition," *Military Review: Foreign Military Studies Office*, May-June 2001, [http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/cubas\\_transition/cubas\\_transition.htm](http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/cubas_transition/cubas_transition.htm); Hernandez, "The Armed Forces in the Cuban Transition."

<sup>85</sup> Policies that emphasize domestic control of the economy.

<sup>86</sup> The shaping of policies in accordance to the political preference.

“privatization was more likely to include restrictions on foreign ownership and management”<sup>87</sup> therefore “preferential access was given to certain actors who can be traced to the community of the government coalition.”<sup>88</sup> The FAR’s involvement in the joint venture companies entailed the brokerage of deals with foreign companies, administration of projects and market search for Cuban exports; this role in turn gave FAR officers a privileged position as liaisons for foreign capital.

While the armed forces’ involvement in civilian enterprises was an avenue for job creation and a source of privileges for its officers during the economic crisis, it has not been troublefree. In addition to the warfighting capacity and readiness degradation mentioned previously, Hal Klepak brings attention to two problematic trends, in his book *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times*, the growth of corruption and junior officer dissatisfaction. Klepak argues that the FAR’s economic reforms while it improved its performance as an institution first, the later management of civilian state enterprises, and subsequent creation of new hybrid enterprises in which the state remains the shareholder has allowed for corruption among the ranks and a growing gap between junior and senior officers. The first trend has been addressed by the regime as arrests and removals after investigations have showed examples of wrongdoing, but in spite of harsh sentences, it continues to be a problem. Furthermore, Klepak assess that the admiration from the public at large towards the FAR has evolved into resentment to what is perceived as privilege by normal Cubans. The second trend corresponds to the generation of officers who have joined during a special period over 20 years in length with aspirations of prestige. This latter group now faces “curtailed training possibilities, restricted promotions linked to fewer activities abroad and cuts in strength at home, much reduced potential for interesting postings...real life in the forces can prove much less attractive than many thought when they joined or indeed even experienced earlier on their careers.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> M. Victoria Murrillo, “Political Bias in Policy Convergence: Privatization Choices in Latin America,” *World Politics* (2002): 471.

<sup>88</sup> Murrillo, “Political Bias in Policy Convergence: Privatization Choices in Latin America,” 473.

<sup>89</sup> Hal Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 65.

In summary, the strategies addressing the “special period” have shifted the FAR’s role to a centric position within the domestic economy. This trend will be clear by examining two important economy sectors in the following chapter and the project used towards its economic liberalization known as *perfeccionamiento empresarial* in the next section.

## **B.     *PERFECCIONAMIENTO EMPRESARIAL***

To understand the current dynamics of reforms and the implications to the FAR, it is first necessary to comprehend the “official policy to guide the full restructuring of the Cuban state economic system,”<sup>90</sup> better known as *perfeccionamiento empresarial* and its dynamics in terms of political power. This section also explores the objectives and enabling conditions that allowed for the transfer of these managerial and organizational methods to sectors of the civilian economy.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *perfeccionamiento empresarial* was initially a Cuban military business improvement model applied to the Military Industries Union with the intent of mitigating the reduction in resources while maintaining repairs for its air, land and naval weapons systems. This blueprint was later expanded to pharmaceutical, biotechnology and sugar sectors within the UIM. By 1994, “the Military Industries Union produced 58 million pesos worth of goods, striving to achieve the principle of financial self-sufficiency.”<sup>91</sup> That same year, with Fidel Castro’s endorsement, Raul Castro’s project (*perfeccionamiento empresarial*) gained the legal structure to expand to the civilian sectors under “Law Number 75 of National Defense,”<sup>92</sup> which tasked the FAR with recovery assistance that consisted of the following.

- Feeding themselves and part of the population in its regular or national service components
- Earning foreign exchange through activities it was especially well-suited to perform and which could be used for military or other purposes for which the state had the need

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<sup>90</sup> Amuchastegui, FAR: Mastering Reforms, 433.

<sup>91</sup> Mastrapa III, “Soldiers and Businessmen: The FAR During the Special Period,” 430.

<sup>92</sup> Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times*, 61.

- Maintaining emergency services in conjunction with the Ministry of the Interior, to be reinforced by the military, especially after the “Habano” riots of August 1994, and in line with the search and rescue and disaster relief duties of long standing
- Placing emphasis on those roles required by Cuban foreign policy as a result of the real need to reduce points of friction with the United States, especially in the fields of illegal immigration control and antinarcotics operations<sup>93</sup>

Interestingly, and in contrast to all previous policy reforms, while Fidel was the Commander in Chief, for the first time, the push for policy reform did not come from him but from the Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (Raul Castro). In the past, advocates for economic change had been dismissed by the Politburo, and what is more significant was that Fidel was not in favor of this model even as he faced enormous economic pressure. In the end, he conceded to Raul’s plan and the FAR economic team’s recommendation as it would allow “him to reaffirm the place and the role of the FAR as the leading institution in the field of reforms and by doing this he remains very much in control of the pace and modalities of the reform process.”<sup>94</sup>

Although Domingo Amuchastegui argues that such expansion does not translate to militarization of the economy because the “language (used) is of costs and benefits of necessary lay-offs, of responding to market demands and mathematical models, and relying on principles of financial engineering and computerized systems and complex telecommunications, not in giving orders or resorting to extra-economic coercion.”<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, the main instrument of this economic and institutional restructuring has been the *manu militari*, from the EJT’s and MTT’s augmentation in agricultural tasks to feed the armed forces, to the management of tourism, banking and commerce by officers of the FAR; the scope, magnitude and complexity points towards militarization. The current trend takes this process beyond the survival and recovery objectives and can be interpreted as an institutional continuity instrument given that as of 1996, the MINFAR

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<sup>93</sup> Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times*, 62.

<sup>94</sup> Amuchastegui, “Cuba’s Armed Forces: Power and Reforms,” 114.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

has been “able to self finance more than 50 percent of its expenses...while providing foodstuffs and jobs to its rank and file”<sup>96</sup> and by “June 2000–1,419... enterprises were already involved in the early stages of *perfeccionamiento*.”<sup>97</sup>

When considering the increasing number of officers who have demonstrated loyalty to Raul Castro have been appointed to key government, economic and party posts while he was the Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and his success in promoting policy that expanded *perfeccionamiento empresarial* to domestic enterprises, is it evident why Frank Mora catalogues this period as the rise of *Raulismo*. In his article, “The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier,” he defines it as the “process by which Raul Castro enhanced his role and that of the institution he commands in sectors deemed critical for the regime during the Special Period, helping him to strengthen and consolidate his position and that of the FAR in society and consequently, in a post-Fidel transition.”<sup>98</sup> Regardless of how the SPE policy concession evolved, it is clear that a transition in the institutional power of the FAR occurred just as its mission changed during the special period and it merits analysis within the framework of civil-military relations.

### C. PATTERN OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Even though the mission set for the FAR seems to shift every decade or so (beginning in 1960), the special period (from 1991) marks a milestone in terms of civil-military relations as the establishment of a mission model that can be used to explain the current developments. This section interprets the FAR’s incursion into the domestic economy using the “developmentalist model” proposed by J. Samuel Fitch. His “military tutelage” definition is used to describe how this mission shift differs from the previous “Fidel” centric policy changes. Deborah Norden’s article, “Civilian Authority Without Civilian Dominance?” illustrates how untraditional roles affirm the value of the armed

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<sup>96</sup> Mora, “The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier,” 10.

<sup>97</sup> Amuchastegui, FAR: Mastering Reforms, 436.

<sup>98</sup> Mora, “The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier,” 7.



forces within the government policy agenda, and finally, Kristina Mani's article, "Militaries in Business: State-Making and Entrepreneurship in the Developing World," is used to determine how this military economic enclave functions.

The developmentalist model described by Fitch attributes the proliferation of non-military activities to the need of the military to "develop their own resources."<sup>99</sup> This model also attributes the lack of differentiation between "military, paramilitary and police functions"<sup>100</sup> as causal for the accumulation of non-military missions. In Cuba, however, the police and military functions were clearly defined and the latter has never expanded into domestic law enforcement or dissent repression for that matter. The blurriness of identity as in most "socialist" systems lies between civil society, the armed forces and state and this founding condition just as well facilitates the military initiative of expanding missions as a response to crisis. Furthermore, for the first time since the period of the FAR's institutional foundation, the military took the lead in public policy formulation. This change can be confirmed by Raul Castro's role as Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces as described by Frank O. Mora:

Vice-President Carlos Lage, a top economic official said ...the economic reforms had been "strongly pushed by Raul with the support of Fidel." Raul was mentioned repeatedly in the press or by high government, party or military officials as the "architect," "father," or "brains behind Cuba's effort to save the revolution from economic crisis."<sup>101</sup>

Figure 4 illustrates the jurisdictional expansion that occurred during the special period. The centrality of the military crafting domestic economic policy along with the FAR's role in key economic sectors can be defined as "military tutelage" in which "the armed forces participate in the policy process and exercise oversight over civilian"<sup>102</sup> (or in this case, the communist party) authority.

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<sup>99</sup> Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*, 187.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Mora *The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier*, 7.

<sup>102</sup> Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*, 38.

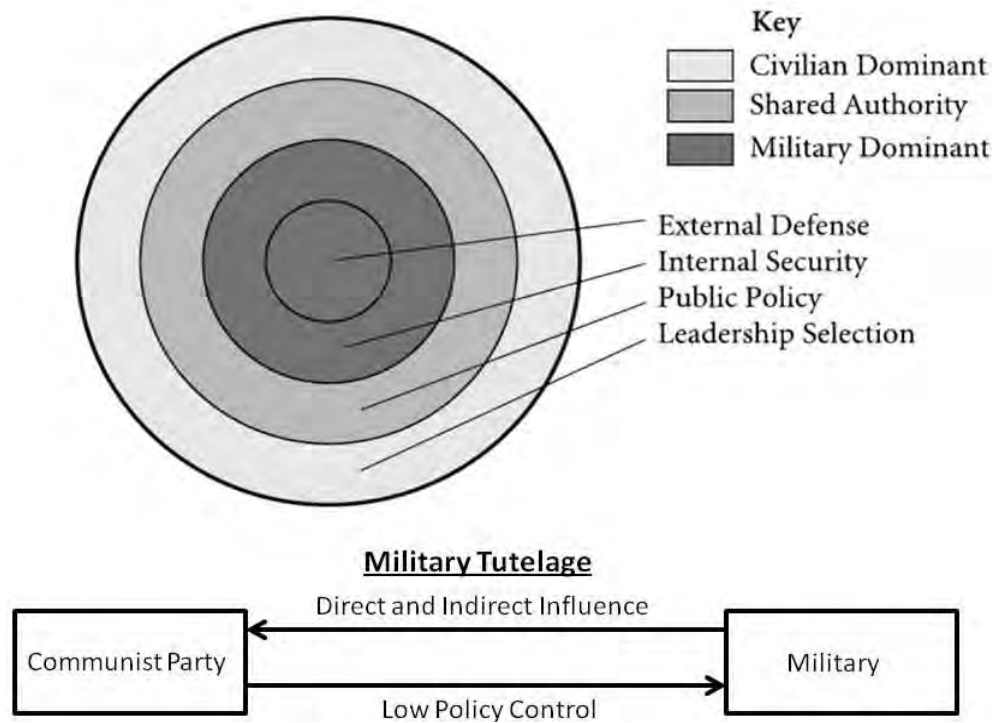


Figure 4. Special Period

In a democratic regime, it would be safe to assert that having the military take the lead in policy is one short step from a coup in terms of civilian control. The post-authoritarian nature of Cuba dictates a different set of conditions; therefore, using Mani's framework, "the level of state capacity, the nature of military organization,...and how these (military economic) enclaves function"<sup>103</sup> must be considered to determine who controls the process and who is served by the gains. This framework confirms that the lack of state capacity in terms of "guiding and controlling the military behavior"<sup>104</sup> increases the likelihood of military entrepreneurship while the "professional" character of the FAR's military organization ensures those gains are destined for institutional benefit and not individual gain. The term "professionalism" in this particular case refers to Huntington's formula of a military that is "trained and organized to possess specially learned skills designed to protect the state and nation, generating a sense of in-group

<sup>103</sup> Mani, "Militaries in Business: State Making and Entrepreneurship in the Developing World," 593.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 594.

identity.”<sup>105</sup> Having defined the civil-military relations model of the special period, the conditions that lead to this enclave building, and the likely destiny for the resource gains, it is also important to consider the political significance of the mission expansion beyond an expansion of the resource base.

The FAR’s current independence from this political society (communist party) for resources raises issues of political effectiveness over the ability of the regime to establish authority over the armed forces. However, beyond Huntington’s definition of “subjective control,”<sup>106</sup> the Castros have set in place a system in which the military is not just integrated into the administration, and therefore, an active participant in the government’s policies by sharing a political-military agenda but it also adds to the system of incentives by providing the FAR officers protection from the effects of the economic crisis. Borrowing from Deborah Norden’s article, “Civilian Authority Without Civilian Dominance?”, it can be deduced that untraditional roles affirm the value of the armed forces within the government policy agenda. The FAR’s expansion of untraditional roles have not only created a “shared political-military agenda, and therefore enhanced the government’s authority over the armed forces;”<sup>107</sup> it also has ensured its budget while maintaining the FAR officers’ standards of living, and hence, boosting military loyalty.

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<sup>105</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations*, 8–10.

<sup>106</sup> Where the authority of a Government institution is exerted over the military or the latter is co-opted by a political group.

<sup>107</sup> Deborah Norden, “Civilian Authority Without Civilian Dominance? Assessing Venezuelan Political-Military Relations under Chavez.” *Nueva Sociedad* (2008): 213.

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## IV. MILITARIZATION OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY

From the period following the suppression of the insurgency in the Escambray Mountains (1965), the FAR has assumed non-defense related missions. The process of militarization of the Cuban economy, which originated with an increase in the labor supply dedicated to the sugar harvest in the late 1960s, has evolved into entrepreneurship sponsored by the limited market-oriented reforms that has granted them centrality within today's Cuban economy. Cuba's armed forces have pursued military and economic missions simultaneously; this chapter aims to capture the adaptability to non-traditional missions by analyzing their involvement in the sugar, and later, in the tourism industries. Finally, the implications of these missions are placed in context by exploring the FAR's power dynamics with other political institutions and resulting patterns of civil-military relations.

### A. SUGAR INDUSTRY

Throughout Cuba's history, the economic condition of the island has been closely associated with the sugar industry. The share of land dedicated to its cultivation and amount of employment generated by the industry commands centrality in Cuba's economic environment. As illustrated by Perez-Lopez:

Sugar was the engine that powered the Cuban economy. Sugar Production was the main industrial activity, the main generator of foreign exchange, and the largest single employer in the nation...When the international market price was high, the island experienced a period of economic prosperity referred to as *vacas gordas* (fat cows), this was followed by prolonged periods of low sugar prices and *vacas flacas* (thin cows).<sup>108</sup>

Given the importance of the sugar industry, it is only logical that the central institution of the regime (FAR) became involved in one way, or another, with this enterprise.

As early as 1963, when compulsory military service was being considered, Raul Castro proposed the FAR's entry into this industry as a way to compensate for the

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<sup>108</sup> Jorge F. Perez-Lopez, "The Cuban Sugar Industry After the Transition," in *Cuba After Castro: Legacies, Challenges, and Impediments: Appendices, Appendix E*, ed. Edward Gonzalez and Kevin F. McCarthy (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2004), 169.

military's burden on the economy. He proposed, "that the armed forces should help in the nation's economy...[we intend to make] the burden of military expenditures on our people a bit lighter, in other words, we must work as part of our service, especially in the sugar harvest."<sup>109</sup>

From the beginning of the FAR's augmentation into the sugar industry in 1968 to 1971, the number of FAR soldiers assigned to sugar harvest fluctuated from "38,000 (in 1969 to) 70,000 (in 1970 while proportionally ranging from) 35 to 64"<sup>110</sup> percent of the regular armed forces. In contrast to similar employment during the Batista regime, for the first time, soldiers assumed technical and managerial positions in addition to labor augmentation. The FAR's involvement ranged from the Air Force using airplanes to spray fertilizers on the fields, the military supervision and operation of farm machinery, transportation management tasks, to the building of roads, railroad tracks and temporary housing all the while maintaining military organization and chain of command.

The soldier's combined efforts during the FAR's initial entry into the sugar harvest can be attributed with the cutting of up "20 percent of the sugar cane harvest."<sup>111</sup> Coincidentally, and in spite of political opposition by 1968, the military expenditures allocation of the national budget rose also "20 percent."<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, this was the largest increase in the defense budget in over 10 years; the budget growth was disproportionate to the growth of the Cuban economy, and overall, the FAR did not prove to be more efficient than civilians involved in the sugar harvest.

In the early 1970s, as the FAR aimed at professionalization in preparation for the internationalist role, the re-assertion of military tasks gave way to the creation of the Youth Labor Army (*Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo—EJT*). As stated by Dominguez, "this army (was) specialized in production, when these tasks (were) completed, or if they are only seasonal, the members of the Army of Working Youth are expected to prepare for

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<sup>109</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 356.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 357–358.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 359.

combat.”<sup>113</sup> Although the EJT’s level of combat readiness remains questionable, its compensation for workforce shortages allowed the FAR to focus on military tasks, and for a while (until the special period), devolved production tasks back to civilians.

Two decades later, the dramatic reductions in the FAR’s budget during the special period occurred to be followed by numerous unsuccessful sugarcane harvests between 1991 and 1995 caused by a scarcity of fuel and spare parts. These conditions promoted the initial re-insertion of the FAR into the Cuban economy with the replacement of the Minister of Sugar in 1997 with “General Ulises Rosales del Toro.”<sup>114</sup>

The nomination of General Rosales del Toro is relevant in many ways. He is considered the architect of the popular militarization also known as the “War of All the People.” He was the “highest ranking officer in Cuba to study business management abroad during the initial phase of the *perfeccionamiento empresarial*”<sup>115</sup> and he is a member of Raul Castro’s inner circle.

In spite of all General Rosales del Toro’s accomplishments and management measures (to include the closing of sugar mills in 2002), the sugar harvest decline has continued until today. Immediately upon his tenure, in “1997 and 1998 harvests, total production was between 3.1 and 3.2 million metric tons, while exports are believed to have reached 2.4 million tons. For the 1998/1999 harvest, the Cuban government (reported a) production in the order of 3.6 million tons.”<sup>116</sup> By way of comparison and highlighting the production decline, “in 1990, Cuba produced 8.4 tons of sugar while in 2010 it produced just 1.5 tons,”<sup>117</sup> the lowest in over 50 years.

Notwithstanding the downturn of the sugar industry in today’s Cuban economy, it continues to be an important sector of the Cuban economy and the FAR’s re-expansion of missions.

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<sup>113</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*. 359.

<sup>114</sup> Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times*, 85.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Mastrapa III, “Soldiers and Businessmen: The FAR During the Special Period,” 431.

<sup>117</sup> Sullivan, *Cuba: Issues for the 112th Congress*, 13.

The sugar industry employs directly about one-tenth of the labor force and indirectly supports about one half of all workers. The domestic value-added associated with sugar production and production of sugar derivatives is much higher than that for other current alternatives (such as tourism).<sup>118</sup>

Tourism, on the other hand, is the most profitable enterprise in the FAR's current portfolio.

## **B. TOURISM INDUSTRY**

In the early 1990s, as the FAR expanded its economic reach beyond the UIM, tourism became the most profitable venture of all the sectors explored. These enterprise-tailored services catering to international tourism were organized under the *Grupo de Administracion Empresarial* (GAESA) with the name of Gaviota Tourism Group.

Gaviota operates and controls the following enterprises: Hoteles Gaviota, Gaviota Tour, Arcoiris, Marinas Gaviota, Via (auto rentals), Transgaviota (helicopter and small aircraft rentals), Tiendas Gaviota, Parques Naturales Gaviota, Inversiones Gaviota and Commercial Gaviota.<sup>119</sup>

General Luis Perez Rospide, previous head of the UIM and close associate of Raul Castro, managed this conglomerate of 10 enterprises. It is estimated that the FAR tourism enterprises "manage nearly 20 percent of Cuba's total tourism trade,"<sup>120</sup> generating in turn, "30 percent of all military expenditures while providing employment to 25 percent of demobilized troops."<sup>121</sup> Gaviota has provided self-sufficiency to the FAR as its government funding decreased, all the while becoming one of the largest foreign exchange earners in Cuba after sugar.

In addition to an already significant command over the tourism sector, Gaviota has established a number of subsidiaries administrated by GAESA. Among them are a company for the importation and exportation of products named Tecnotex, agriculture and cattle businesses named Agrotex, as well as real estate, construction and shipyard

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<sup>118</sup> Perez-Lopez, "The Cuban Sugar Industry After the Transition," 204.

<sup>119</sup> Mastrapa III, "Soldiers and Businessmen: The FAR During the Special Period," 431.

<sup>120</sup> Mora, "The Far and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocrat-Soldier," 12.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 11.



services. Lastly, but perhaps just as important, are the *Tiendas para la Recaudación de Divisas*—TRD (Shops for the Collection of Foreign Currency). Formerly a store that carried expensive imported goods for a tourist clientele, TRD has evolved into an enterprise in which Cuban consumers who have remittances dollars or Euros can purchase convenience items otherwise not available. According to Klepak, this enterprise also constitutes an important perk for the FAR as “officers, and sometimes other ranks as well, can expect to have occasional direct access to refrigerators, televisions, air conditioners, and other modern appliances and conveniences, ... on a basis of purchase in *moneda nacional*.”<sup>122</sup>

With “2.53 million tourists (visiting) Cuba in 2010,”<sup>123</sup> it is easy to assess that the economic impact of military enterprises in Cuba is enormous. According to Latell, it is estimated that the FAR’s economic contributions are “89 percent of the exports, 59 percent of tourism revenue, 24 percent of productive service income, 60 percent of hard currency wholesale transactions, 66 percent of hard currency retail sales and employ 20 percent of state workers.”<sup>124</sup> When all subsidiaries and economic activities under the GAESA umbrella are included, “it is estimated that the military controls more than 60 percent of Cuba’s economy.”<sup>125</sup>

## **1. Budget Changes**

Beneath the enormous proportion of the Cuban economy controlled by the military, it is important to analyze how this expansion affects the FAR as an institution, which can be done in terms of budget changes. As the special period significantly reduced the FAR’s budget, the militarization of economic sectors has compensated by generating revenue.

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<sup>122</sup> Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times*, 85.

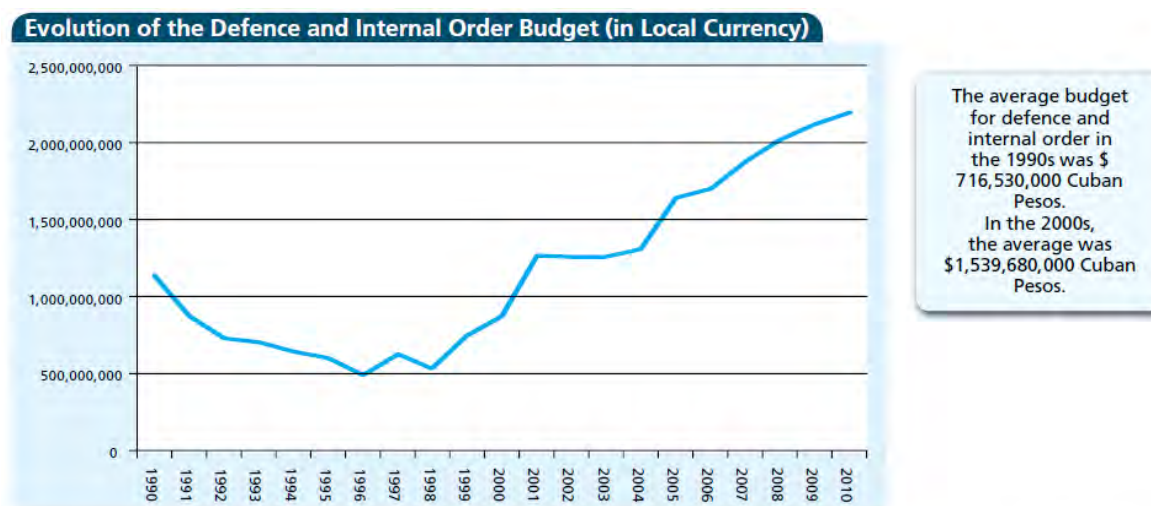
<sup>123</sup> Sullivan, *Cuba: Issues for the 112th Congress*, 12.

<sup>124</sup> Latell, “The Cuban Military and Transition Dynamics,” 26.

<sup>125</sup> Terry L. Maris, “Revolutionary Management: The Role for the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias in the Cuban Economy,” *Military Review* (2009): 66.

By 1994 MINFAR was able to compensate for its dramatic loss of state allotted resources; it spent only 37% of its 1980s budgets. In 1995 the FAR self-financed 30% of its expenses, and 32% of its production was destined for the island's civilian economic sectors. In 1996 Gaviota's total earning was US\$525 million, representing nearly a fifth of the country's total hard currency earnings. Also, more than 75% of all repairs and spare parts for civilian industries came from military enterprises.<sup>126</sup>

Table 1 illustrates how the military enterprises generate revenue in proportions that have more than doubled the average budget for defense and internal order, from the special period to the present. It can be observed that an inversely proportional trend exists in the FAR concerning budget decreases with the expansion of the economy role.



**Source:** Compilation base on *Anuario Estadístico de Cuba* (annual reports 1995-2009) and *Panorama Económico y Social. Cuba 2009*, National Statistics Office of the Republic of Cuba. The figures correspond to execution of the State budget. 2010: *Ley del presupuesto del Estado*. GDP 2010: Estimation by the Ministry of Economy and Planning. Exchange rate: 1 Cuban Peso (non convertible) = 24 US Dollars.

Table 1. Evolution of the Defence and Internal Order Budget (From <sup>127</sup>)

The FAR's capitalization of the regime's economic strategy is but one of two aspects that lead to institutional dominance. The other aspect is the FAR's political power. The next section analyzes the armed forces' political influence stability and the dynamics with other political institutions.

<sup>126</sup> Mora, "From Fidelismo to Raulismo."

<sup>127</sup> Marcela Donadio and Maria de la Paz Tiblietti, *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and Caribbean* (Buenos Aires: Red de Seguridad y Defensa de America Latina, 2010), 183.

### C. FAR POWER DYNAMICS WITH OTHER POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

From the FAR's beginnings, military officers have served among the highest positions of the Communist Party. They have represented the military's interest in the party while some traced their association back to the revolution when they fought in Raul Castro's forces. In this post-totalitarian phase of the regime, it is important to assess the armed forces' participation in the Cuban political framework as it directly relates to the regime's stability and cohesion.

Different from other civil-military analysis on Cuba, which has focused on the relations of the Communist Party over the FAR, the approach in this thesis is to analyze the political power of the FAR through its development to the present. Since the FAR's founding condition established the regime's top hierarchy in the period immediately following the revolution, in a sense, Fidel, Raul and Che can be attributed to establishing the foundation of the FAR's participation in the political framework. More importantly, the FAR had a political mission from its inception that ranged from indoctrination of its own, the "absorption of the structure of the Communist party,"<sup>128</sup> the prevention of cleavages and the development of civilian cadres. Commanders in the FAR were not just managers and technicians but fulfilled political roles as well.

In the early 1960s, the pre-revolutionary Communists aimed at controlling the FAR through political instructors but this process evolved into the military's penetration of the party just as the party had penetrated the armed forces. From 1970 to 1976, the percentage of FAR officers who were either Communist party members or belonged to the Communist Youth Union, rose from "69.6 percent...(to) 86 percent."<sup>129</sup> This increase was followed by a steep decline in the FAR's political participation during the internationalist period of the late 1970s to the early 1980s and a renewed expansion during the strategic realignment towards the end of the internationalist period. As illustrated by Juan M. del Aguila:

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<sup>128</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 364.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 366.

27 percent of the 225 members of the Communist Party's Central Committee's elected for the 1981–1986 period came from either the regular armed forces (MINFAR) or from the Ministry of the Interior (MININT). Incidentally, FAR Division General Abelardo Colome was placed in charge of MININT in 1989 during a time of internal turmoil, scandals, and the execution of Division General Arnaldo Ochoa and three other officers. Placing the FAR's second-highest ranking officer in charge of internal security and domestic intelligence means that the FAR is in charge of maintaining internal order, even if formally MININT has that responsibility.<sup>130</sup>

The purge of government officials in 1989 and realignment of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) under the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) increased their political power by providing control of the coercion hierarchy. Therefore, using Felipe Aguero's view on prerogatives, these conditions could constrain transitional political action not aligned with the interests of the "key actors" who first created the "rules of the game." Aguero also proposes, "strategic interactions with unanticipated consequences are still possible, and the way these interactions evolve depends not only on interests but on comparative strength of the resources competitors for power can bring to the table."<sup>131</sup>

By the end of the Fourth Party Congress in 1991 military representation in the Central Committee reached its lowest level at 12.5 percent...(on the other hand), representation of key officers in the Central Committee increased... to 17.4 percent after the Fifth Party Congress in 1997...By the end of the 1997 Party Congress, the total number of military officers in the Politburo was five out of 24, the highest percentage since 1975.<sup>132</sup>

The 1990s also marked a milestone in terms of political significance; the Fourth Congress was remarkable not just in restructuring actions (MININT realignment under the MINFAR) but also in terms of key political figures. The crisis of the special period served as the background for significant changes as "only 8 of the 14 members from the previous Politburo were re-elected; more than two thirds of the Central Committee was new; the Secretariat was abolished; half of the Central Committee departments were

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<sup>130</sup> del Aguila, "The Cuban Armed Forces: Changing Roles, Continued Loyalties," 520.

<sup>131</sup> Aguero, "Institutions, Transitions and Bargaining," 219.

<sup>132</sup> Mora, "From Fidelismo to Raulismo."

eliminated; and 50 percent of the party was slashed.”<sup>133</sup> However, in terms of the FAR’s political influence, the significance is tied to the inclusion of “four senior FAR officers—Generals Abelardo Colome, Ulises Rosales del Toro, Julio Casas Regueiro, and Leopoldo Cintra Frias”<sup>134</sup> in the new Politburo.

The importance of the generals being included in the Politburo following the Fourth Congress of 1991 was not just the wide array of functions within the FAR but also the career trajectory that followed. General Colome Ibarra has continued to serve as the Minister of Interior since 1989. General Casas Regueiro served as MINFAR Vice Prime Minister, founder/CEO of GAESA, and in 2008, replaced Raul Castro as the Minister of the Revolutionary Forces until his death in September 2011. General Cintra Frias was the head of the Western Army who later replaced General Casas Regueiro in November 2011 as the Minister of the Revolutionary Forces. General Rosales del Toro served as Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, Minister of Sugar (1997), Minister of Agriculture and now serves as the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers. This group of high-ranking officers cement the FAR’s loyalty to Raul Castro at the highest echelons of leadership following his transition to Commander in Chief in 2008. Today, the FAR maintains its political dominance by commanding 14 positions in the Politburo Central Committee and fulfilling 10 of the 38 positions in the Council of Ministers (the state’s top executive and administrative body).

In summary, the FAR’s political mission has prevented friction between the Communist Party and the military. The establishment of conditions has ensured commanding political participation (although not altogether dominance) while the fluctuations in political participation (with increases during periods of untraditional missions) most likely hindered transitional political action. Jorge I Dominguez, as early as 1978, articulated this relationship well by stating, “In Cuba the militarization of the political instructors, the willing acceptance of political norms, roles and structures by

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<sup>133</sup> Leon Eusebio Mujual and Buzon Lorena, “El Exepcionalismo y la Trasendencia: El Caso de las Relaciones Civil Militares en Cuba,” in *Influencias y Resistencias*, ed. Felipe and Fuentes Claudio Aguero (Santiago: Salesianos Impresores S.A., 2009), 60–61.

<sup>134</sup> Mujual and Lorena, “El Exepcionalismo y la Trasendencia: El Caso de las Relaciones Civil Militares en Cuba,” 61.

military officers; the unified leadership that has preserved a single preserved a single military chain of command; the self containment of the party within the military to preserve the institutional autonomy of the armed forces; and the presence of civic soldiers at the core of the ruling elite in charge of civilian and military organizations have combined to prevent ...conflicts.”<sup>135</sup>

A potential problem of this post-authoritarian dynamic is that in the event of a collapse precipitated by crisis, the transition delineates a path in which “the successor regime is likely to be authoritarian or controlled by leaders emerging out of the previous regime.”<sup>136</sup> In any post-Castro scenario, the FAR’s influence raises questions of what would be the dynamics of the transitional government and the military. Of particular concern is whether the FAR will overpower a transitional government into maintaining the economic and authoritarian nature of the state.

#### **D. PATTERN OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

This chapter reviewed the FAR’s current centrality in the regime both economically and politically. When analyzing the current pattern of civil-military relations, it is important to trace the FAR’s political power dynamics, as well as its evolution into entrepreneurship.

The combined insertion of the FAR into the top two Cuban economic sectors (sugar and tourism) has transcended regime survival strategies. The FAR has also evolved into an institutional continuity instrument, which is evidenced by the capacity to self finance over half of the military expenses since 1996 and the generation of revenue that has doubled the budget for defense and internal order during the latter half of the special period.

Table 2 illustrates comparative increases in the defense and internal order budget, government budget and Cuba’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The table reflects an increase in the defense and internal order budget of 100 percent between 2001 and 2010

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<sup>135</sup> Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 367.

<sup>136</sup> Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidations*, 60.

that closely corresponds to Cuba's increase in GDP. This increase can be attributed to the FAR's expansion into the Cuban domestic economy. However, the FAR's capitalization of the regime's economic strategy can only attest to the FAR's adaptability to untraditional missions, as well as flexibility towards budget curtailments while it also has been a co-optation tool for Castro's regime.



Table 2. Comparative Budget Increase (From <sup>137</sup>)

In addition to the FAR's economic expansion, to better understand current Cuban civil-military relations, it is also essential to consider the armed forces' political influence and the FAR's dynamics with other political institutions. The previous relationship must be explored given that:

Cuban military (do not)...exercise discretionary decision making authority over reserved areas of specialization and action. When a high-rank officer is appointed to a civil function, his responsibility and authority cease to respond to the FAR or to specific military interests. Finally, service men do not invest personal assets in private sector undertakings, as nationals' investment in private business is illegal in the isle.<sup>138</sup>

The FAR's origin for its political mission can be attributed to the refinement and absorption of the Communist Party doctrine, as well as the FAR's penetration of the

<sup>137</sup> Donadio and Tiblietti, *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and Caribbean*, 183.

<sup>138</sup> Hernandez, "The Armed Forces in the Cuban Transition," 191.

Communist Party through appointments to the highest positions in the party. Having the institution's political penetration established, the subordination of the MININT under the MINFAR in 1989 increased its political power further by granting monopoly over the coercion mechanisms. A year later, the appointments of the Cuban Fourth Congress accounts for the strategic positioning of generals loyal to Raul Castro who were to become the key figures in reforms, economic expansion and the current institutional dominance of the FAR.

The confirmation of Raul Castro as the president of the Council of State and commander in chief of the FAR on February 24, 2008, cemented at the top of the regime's hierarchy the person responsible for the Cuban economic reforms of the special period and Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces going back to the Cuban Revolution. Raul's transition to the top position in Cuba's government has removed the amount of influence exerted by the FAR on the regime. The appointment of Raul's military loyalists to the Politburo and other key positions (such as his son-in-law Colonel Luis Alberto Rodriguez Lopez-Callejas as the chief executive of GAESA along with the generals included in the Politburo during the Fourth Congress) has maintained, although at a limited level, the FAR's influence on policy. Figure 5 illustrates this dynamic in that Raul's assumption of command has maintained the jurisdictional boundaries intact but the military's influence in policy is limited and indirectly prescribes to J. Samuel Fitch's description of conditional subordination.



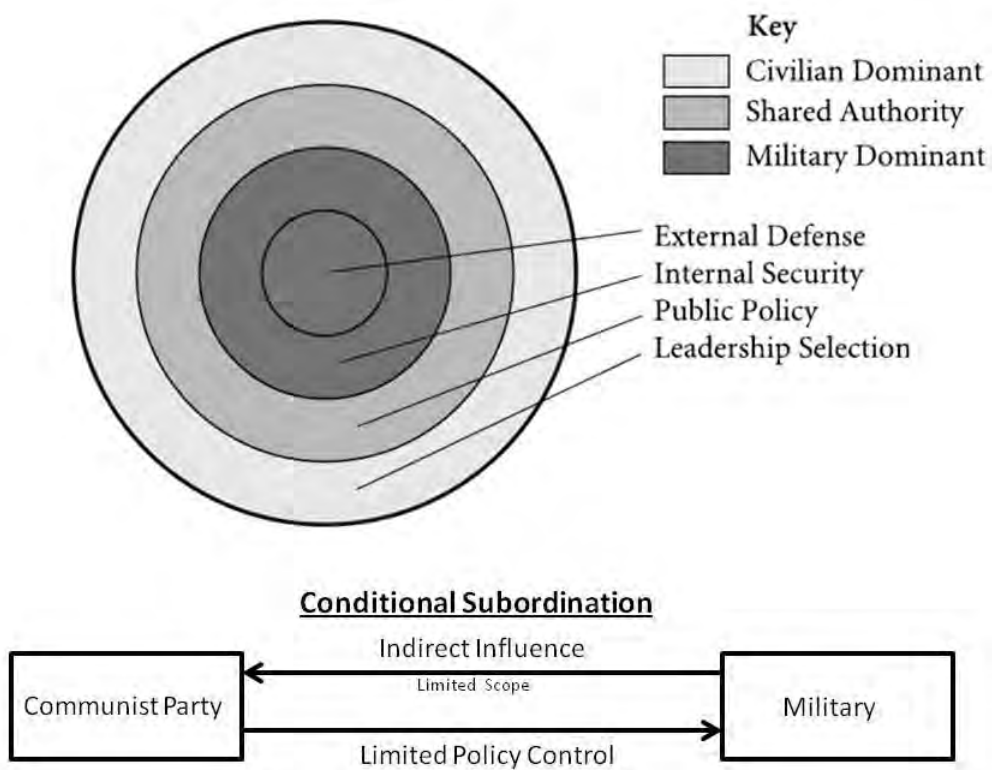


Figure 5. Post-Fidel Period

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## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

### **A. MISSION TRAJECTORY AND PRESENT SITUATION**

The transition in missions experienced by the Cuban FAR has effectively reduced an Army that at its heyday had an end strength of over 200,000 to just over 50,000 active soldiers today. All the while, this transformation has led to one of the most capable war fighting forces in Latin America into an entrepreneurial organization of considerable proportions. This conclusion seeks to explain how the mission, and organizational changes caused by strategic formulation or structural processes forcing the direction of policy have translated to current civil-military relations in Cuba.

This FAR's mission chronology helps to explain the founding factors and trajectory conditions that have granted the institutional cohesion and administrative capacity to overcome a drastic transformation, as well as future implications of the FAR's political dimension while the country undergoes a regime change. Over the years, the FAR's missions have changed in response to macro-economic and foreign policy pressures, as well as the priorities set by the regime leadership, but all along, the development and progression as an institutional actor have granted enough power to influence policy with varying degrees of success. The ebb and flow of the FAR's role in domestic policy influence has changed in reflection of leadership transitions and mission posture.

#### **1. Post Revolution**

The period leading to Fidel Castro's consolidation of power can be categorized as one in which the FAR's missions directly responded to internal challenges. From the insurgency in the Escambray Mountains to the military augmentation of the sugar industry, the FAR's involvement is attributed to the initial survival of the regime. Meanwhile, its first mission of territorial defense and internal security was also fused to civic responsibilities in education, land reform, justice, and law enforcement. The wide spectrum of jurisdictions not only provided the administrative strength but its pervasiveness allowed it to overcome political opposition against its allocation expansion

in the national budget (frozen at 5 percent since the 1960s). With external threats unlikely (post missile crisis) and internal opposition to the regime vanished, the FAR's penetration of the PCC and subsequent professionalization of the force set the conditions for their incursion into "proletarian internationalism" that in turn led to their modernization and offensive re-orientation.

Besides administrative capacity and political influence, the FAR's internal cohesion can also be attributed to its institutional foundation. From the strict discipline established during the insurrection against Batista to the introduction of political indoctrination, the post-revolutionary period significantly shaped the FAR's preconditions for internal cohesion. This cohesion was achieved and is currently maintained through a combination of rewards for loyalty (such as political appointments) and penalties for disloyalty that range up to execution.

The consolidation of FAR leaders at the very top of the regime's leadership and the indoctrination process resulted in further military-political penetration that can also be traced to the foundation of the institution. The indoctrination effort served a two-fold purpose, the refinement of the regime's doctrine, which in turn resulted in increased FAR party membership, while it also earned Fidel Castro's confidence to direct the institution's next mission change.

## **2. Professionalization and Expansion into Internationalism**

With internal threats eliminated, external threats unlikely, and a failed sugar harvest behind them, the FAR's incursion into "proletarian internationalism" came at an opportune time. The military education reform of the period contributed to the ideological hegemony and it also branded the FAR as an instrument of Cuban social mobility. Although defense policy during this period was confined to the top three leaders of the regime (Fidel, Raul and Che), the mission shift served as an avenue to expand the military budget, promotion opportunities and as a source of prestige.

### **3. Popular Militarization**

The decreasing Soviet military assistance and domestic unpopularity of the internationalist campaigns and the poor performance in Grenada marked the movement towards popular militarization. Just as the creation of the EJT responded to the FAR exit strategy from agricultural tasks, the MTT was created to mitigate the FAR's end strength reductions. However, the most important transition in terms of power shifts was the MININT subordination under the FAR, which officially granted monopoly to the institution over all coercion mechanisms. Another significant event of the period was the Ochoa trial, as it reinforced the coercion mechanism of the regime and provided a vivid example of what was to be expected from dissidence during the upcoming austerity.

### **4. Special Period (FAR's Domestic Dimension)**

The Soviet Union collapse during the 1990s forced Cuba into economic reforms that catalyzed the transition of the FAR's mission into a variety of domestic purposes. Although combat readiness has degraded, the strategies employed have resulted in institutional self-sufficiency and arguably maintained some defensive capacity. The FAR's involvement in civilian enterprises has resulted in job creation, a source of privilege for its service members, but more importantly, it has granted the military elite control of over half of the Cuban domestic economy. The FAR's capitalization on the regime's economic strategy has allowed it to compensate the loss of state allotted resources while it also granted institutional continuity and dominance.

Raul Castro's confirmation to the top position of the regime (President of the Council of State) in 2008 has also shifted the civil-military relations in the country from what could be considered military tutelage towards conditional subordination. However, in spite of the reduction on policy influence, the FAR's jurisdictional boundaries still overlap the public policy realm while officers loyal to Raul continue to be appointed to key government and economic positions. Today, the FAR still enjoys political dominance with officers fulfilling a considerable number of the state's top executive and administrative positions within the Politburo.

## B. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Ironically, and although limited, a political and economic transition has occurred during the rule of Raul Castro; the individual person considered to be the “hard-line communist ideologue.”<sup>139</sup> The limited economic reforms initiated in 2008 have been aimed at creating a smaller and more efficient government and reform regulations that inhibit productivity. For the purpose of this research, the recent (2009–2010) three reforms that have future civil-military implications are the establishment of term limits for the top government and party positions, “the liquidation of state enterprises with sustained financial losses,”<sup>140</sup> and the “creation of special development zones for foreign investment.”<sup>141</sup>

The pragmatic approach of Raul Castro has resulted in investment from a variety of countries, and hence, has continued to expand the economic reach of the FAR. By restricting who can benefit from these economic reforms, the FAR’s elite manager officers have continued to build their economic and political power. All the while, these reforms have caused little transition in political power, as it has remained in the hands of early revolutionary leaders. Therefore, as illustrated in Brenden M. Carbonell’s article, “FAR from Perfect: The Military and Corporatism,” the limitation of interests groups operating in society force those with privileged access to maintain the government’s position, and therefore, slow down societal change and perpetuate the state’s survival.

It is clear that the FAR power elites will play a crucial role in the nation’s destiny beyond the Castros’ lifetime. They will either actively reshape the Cuban system or simply arbitrate the transition; nevertheless, the stability and cohesiveness of the transition depend on how the economic prerogatives attained by the institution during the special period are approached.

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<sup>139</sup> Sullivan, *Cuba: Issues for the 112th Congress*, 6.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The limited amount of primary sources and quantitative data available about the FAR makes research difficult, and it also leaves many areas unexplored. At this time, the information gaps may be a bridge too far given the military nature of the FAR and perceived besieged condition of the regime.

However, if conditions change, it would be interesting to transcend beyond the issue of control to issues of effectiveness and efficiency. By utilizing the framework proposed by Dr. Thomas C. Bruneau in his book. *Patriots for Profit: Contractors and the Military in U.S. National Security*, the FAR civil-military relations could be assessed in terms of “effectiveness in implementing roles and missions, and efficiency in the use of resources.”<sup>142</sup>

The assessment of effectiveness can effectively gauge whether or not the FAR has retained a defensive capability in spite of drastic reductions. Efficiency needs to be addressed to determine if the revenue gained by the FAR through this joint ventures is actually used in accordance with the government’s intent or consent. The latter is particularly relevant as news continues to surface indicating that corruption has tainted the reforms aimed at strengthening Cuba’s socialist system. In recent months, “dozens of Cubans have been jailed, including former government officials and top executives of state companies.”<sup>143</sup> The degree of involvement of FAR officers in activities counterproductive to the country’s economic problem can serve as a precondition for political violence and alter the institutional hierarchy altogether.

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<sup>142</sup> Thomas C. Bruneau, *Patriots for Profit: Contractors and the Military in U.S. National Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 5.

<sup>143</sup> Nelson Acosta, *Cuban Official Says Corruption Crackdown to Go On*, November 9, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/09/us-cuba-corruption-idUSTRE7A88F820111109>.

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